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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes findings from a survey of chairs/directors of early childhood teacher preparation programs at two- and four-year institutes of higher education regarding diversity. The focus of the survey was how teacher preparation institutions are dealing with issues of diversity in their faculty, highlighting comparisons between historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and non-HBCUs as well as comparisons between two- and four-year institutions. Some of the key findings follow. There was a significantly higher percentage of African American faculty members at four-year schools than at two-year schools. There were more American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic part-time faculty members at two-year schools than at four-year schools. Four-year schools rated difficulty attracting and retaining ethnically and racially diverse faculty as a significantly greater challenge than did two-year schools. A greater percentage of HBCUs offered early childhood programs than did non-HBCUs. HBCUs were more likely than non-HBCUs to require a practicum in infant-toddler care and education, family childcare, home visitation, and program administration. The HBCUs were more likely than non-HBCUs to prepare students for working with children from diverse backgrounds and non-English speakers. Early childhood faculty members in all programs served larger numbers of students compared to faculty in other departments on their campuses and had a lower percentage of full-time (versus part-time) faculty in their departments. Key content areas of both types of programs are highlighted. The report concludes with a discussion of implications for policy and diversity issues. (KB)

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NCEDL Spotlights

No. 28 November 2000

Early childhood teacher prep

Following are excerpts from a presentation by Diane Early, Pamela Winton and Carol Day, based on a nationally representative survey of chairs/directors of early childhood teacher preparation programs at two- and four-year institutes of higher education. The presentation is "Are Early Childhood Teachers Prepared to Serve ALL Children: Needs and Challenges of Early Childhood Teacher Education Programs."

Teacher prep institutions struggle with diversity issues

A national survey of two- and four-year institutes of higher learning (IHEs) shows a dramatic lack of diversity in the early childhood faculty. This comes at a time of increasing diversity in the young children in America. Findings related to diversity include these:

- Over 80% of part-time and full-time faculty members in early childhood education departments are non-Hispanic White.
- Program chairs said the biggest challenge they faced was the "difficulty attracting and retaining ethnically and linguistically diverse faculty."

Differences between 2- and 4- year IHEs

The study examined differences between early childhood programs in 2- and 4-year IHEs. Key findings include:

- There is a significantly higher percentage of African American faculty members at 4-year schools than at 2-year schools
- On the other hand, 2-year schools include significantly more American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic part-time faculty members than 4-year schools.
- The 4-year IHEs rated difficulty attracting and retaining ethnically and racially diverse faculty as a significantly greater challenge than did the 2-year schools.

Findings among historically black IHEs

The study also examined differences between historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Non-HBCUs. Key findings include:

- Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are playing an important role in preparing the early childhood workforce. A higher percentage (50%) offer early childhood programs than non-HBCUs (29%).
- HBCUs are playing particularly important roles in preparing teachers who work in child care with infants and toddlers. HBCUs are more likely than non-HBCUs to require a practica in infant-toddler care and education, family child care, home visiting, and program administration.
- HBCUs are more likely than non-HBCUs to prepare students for working with children from diverse backgrounds and non-English speakers.
- Early childhood faculty members in all programs serve larger numbers of students compared to faculty in other departments on their campuses. They also have a lower percentage of full-time (versus part-time) faculty in their departments. This is an even bigger challenge for HBCUs. Full-time faculty members at 4-year HBCUs serve an average of 32 students versus 27 students in 4-year non-HBCUs.

Policy implications

- Resources must be earmarked to address the lack of diversity in early childhood faculty ranks at 2- and 4-year IHEs.
- Resources should be especially targeted at HBCUs to support their existing efforts at preparing the early childhood workforce.

Resources should be used to reduce faculty-teacher ratios and increase the number of full-time faculty in ALL early childhood teacher preparation programs.

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Key content areas: HBCUs vs. non-HBCUs

Working with families from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds: 52% of HBCUs require an entire course or more vs. 42% of non-HBCUs. Insofar as a practicum, 95% of HBCUs require one in this area vs. 77% of non-HBCUs.

Working with bilingual children or children with limited English proficiency: 14% of HBCU's require an entire course or more vs. 10% of non-HBCUs. Insofar as a practicum, 60% of the HBCUs require one vs. 29% of non-HBCUs.

Infant/toddler education and care: 62% of HBCUs require an entire course or more vs. 38 percent of non-HBCUs. Insofar as a practicum, 90% of HBCUs require one vs. 66% of non-HBCUs.

Home-visiting: 20% of HBCUs require an entire course or more vs. 8% of non-HBCUs. Insofar as a practicum, 40% of HBCUs require one vs. 22% of non-HBCUs.

Early childhood program administration: 38% of HBCUs require an entire course or more vs. 34% of non-HBCUs. Insofar as a practicum, 75% of HBCUs require one vs. 29% of non-HBCUs.

Discussion of diversity issues

The diversity challenges facing all of higher education are present in early childhood teacher preparation program—the racial/ethnic composition of the faculty is highly White, non-Hispanic.

Because the primary mission of these programs is to prepare teachers who will work with increasingly diverse populations of young children, lack of ethnic/racial diversity seems even more problematic as compared with non-service-oriented university and college departments. These data help explain an earlier finding by other researchers that a large majority of teachers do not feel well prepared to teach students with limited English proficiency, from cultural backgrounds different from their own, or with disabilities.

The fact that faculty members see attracting and retaining ethnically and linguistically diverse faculty as their biggest challenge affirms faculty awareness of the problem.

The lack of diversity among faculty means that students who might want to pursue advance degrees see few models in these roles; this has been described in the previous studies as a major factor limiting diversity in early childhood leadership.

A lack of diversity among students pursing advanced degrees can only perpetuate the problem of racial/ethnic homogeneity at the faculty level.

For More Information

- Hurtado, S., Milem, j., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen. W. (1999). *Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 26(8). Washington: The George Washington Univ. Graduate School of Education & Human Development.
- Hains, A.H., Lynch, E. W. & Winton, P.J. (1999). *Moving toward cross-cultural competence in lifelong personnel development: A review of the literature.* Champaign, IL: CLAS Institute, University of Illinois.

New directory

One outcome of this study is the publication of an online and print directory of all early childhood teacher preparation programs, organized by state. Go to **www.cdacouncil.org**

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